



General Assembly

February Session, 2016

**Substitute Bill No. 426**

\* SB00426JUD 032216 \*

**AN ACT CREATING A TASK FORCE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO  
LEGAL COUNSEL IN CIVIL MATTERS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a task force  
2 to study the nature, extent and consequences of unmet legal needs of  
3 state residents in civil matters. The task force shall examine, on a state-  
4 wide basis, the impact that the lack of access to legal counsel in civil  
5 matters is having on the ability of state residents to secure essential  
6 human needs.

7 (b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

8 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,  
9 one of whom shall be a director of a legal clinic program of a law  
10 school located in the state, and one of whom shall be a mayor of a city  
11 with a population exceeding one hundred thousand;

12 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one  
13 of whom shall be an attorney who either has a solo practice or is in a  
14 law firm located in the state with twenty or fewer attorneys, and one of  
15 whom shall be an attorney in a law firm located in the state with one  
16 hundred or more attorneys;

17 (3) Two appointed by the majority leader of the House of  
18 Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of the Open

19 Communities Alliance, and one of whom shall represent an  
20 organization advocating on behalf of the disability community;

21 (4) Two appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, one of  
22 whom shall be a representative of the Connecticut Coalition Against  
23 Domestic Violence, and one of whom shall be a mayor of a city with a  
24 population not exceeding one hundred thousand;

25 (5) Two appointed by the minority leader of the House of  
26 Representatives, one of whom shall be a representative of a pro bono  
27 program organized by a law firm located in the state, and one of  
28 whom shall be a state resident who has been a pro se litigant in a civil  
29 matter in a state court;

30 (6) Two appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, one of  
31 whom shall be a representative of the Connecticut Bar Association, and  
32 one of whom shall be an in-house counsel attorney for a state business;

33 (7) The chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing  
34 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
35 relating to the judiciary;

36 (8) Three appointed by the Chief Court Administrator, one of whom  
37 shall be a judge of the Superior Court who is assigned to the Family  
38 Division or has been assigned to the Family Division in the three-year  
39 period prior to the effective date of this section, and one of whom shall  
40 be a judge of the Superior Court who is assigned to the housing  
41 session or has been assigned to the housing session in the three-year  
42 period prior to the effective date of this section;

43 (9) The Chief Justice of the state Supreme Court, or the Chief  
44 Justice's designee;

45 (10) The Chief Public Defender, or the Chief Public Defender's  
46 designee;

47 (11) The Chief State's Attorney, or the Chief State's Attorney's

48 designee;

49 (12) The Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee;

50 (13) The Commissioner of Social Services, or the commissioner's  
51 designee;

52 (14) The Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee;

53 (15) The president of the Connecticut Bar Association, or the  
54 president's designee;

55 (16) The president of the Connecticut Bar Foundation, or the  
56 president's designee;

57 (17) The dean of The University of Connecticut School of Law, or the  
58 dean's designee;

59 (18) The dean of the Quinnipiac University School of Law, or the  
60 dean's designee;

61 (19) The dean of the Yale University School of Law, or the dean's  
62 designee;

63 (20) The executive director of Connecticut Legal Services, or the  
64 executive director's designee;

65 (21) The executive director of Greater Hartford Legal Aid, or the  
66 executive director's designee; and

67 (22) The executive director of the New Haven Legal Assistance  
68 Association, or the executive director's designee.

69 (c) All appointments to the task force shall be made not later than  
70 thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be  
71 filled by the appointing authority.

72 (d) The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president  
73 pro tempore of the Senate shall select the chairpersons of the task force

74 from among the members of the task force. Such chairpersons shall  
 75 schedule the first meeting of the task force, which shall be held not  
 76 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

77 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the  
 78 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the  
 79 judiciary shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

80 (f) Not later than December 15, 2016, the task force shall submit a  
 81 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing  
 82 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
 83 relating to the judiciary, in accordance with the provisions of section  
 84 11-4a of the general statutes. Such recommendations shall include  
 85 suggested mechanisms to: (1) Secure access to justice and legal  
 86 representation in civil matters by increasing the availability of legal  
 87 assistance with civil matters throughout the state; and (2) encourage  
 88 increased pro bono service by the state's legal community. The task  
 89 force shall terminate on the date that it submits such report or  
 90 December 15, 2016, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
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**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 1(a), repetitive language was deleted and the last sentence relating to recommendations of the task force was moved to Section 1(f) for clarity and consistency. In Section 1(b)(8), "had been assigned" was changed to "has been assigned" for accuracy.

**JUD**      *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*